

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 /082 W
----- 064945

O R 152011Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7387

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3672

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, EINV, GT

SUBJ: WALL STREET JOURNAL STORY REGARDING DEL MONTE AND GUATEMALA

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED AMBASSADOR TO CALL AT NOON JULY 15.
LARGE NUMBERS OF PRESS WERE ASSEMBLING OUTSIDE FONMIN'S DOOR
AS AMBASSADOR WAS ADMITTED.

2. MOLINA ORANTES SAID HE ASKED AMBASSADOR TO CALL AT REQUEST OF
PRESIDENT LAUGERUD. PRESIDENT WAS FURIOUS AND DISPLEASED OVER
WALL STREET JOURNAL JULY 14 STORY CONCERNING PAYMENTS MADE BY
DEL MONTE TO GUATEMALAN TO OBTAIN GOVERNMENT APPROVAL OF DEL
MONTE'S PURCHASE OF UNITED BRANDS' GUATEMALAN PROPERTIES.
PRESIDENT HAD TELEPHONED FOREIGN MINISTER TWICE DURING THE
MORNING ABOUT THE ARTICLE. HE WONDERED WHAT THE MOTIVATION
WAS FOR DEL MONTE'S STATEMENT. WAS THE STORY A PROVOCATION
OR WAS THERE A POLITICAL MOTIVATION BEHIND IT TO DAMAGE
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LAUGERUD AND HIS GOVERNMENT?

3. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID PRESS HAD ASSEMBLED ANTICIPATING GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT WAS GOING TO PROTEST TO USG. HOWEVER, SUCH WAS NOT THE CASE. INSTEAD, MOLINA SAID HE WISHED TO EXPRESS TO THE AMBASSADOR THE CONCERN, DISTRESS AND DISPLEASURE OF THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT OVER THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE AND SPECIFICALLY THE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO DEL MONTE. THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT WISHED TO SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF THE USG IN OBTAINING ANY FURTHER INFORMATION THAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE AND SPECIFICALLY THE IDENTITIES OF ANY GUATEMALANS WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.

4. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE TOOK NOTE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENTS AND WOULD FORWARD THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST FOR FURTHER SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON. HE DID NOT FEEL THE USG WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO BE OF MUCH ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FURTHER INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE STATED THAT DEL MONTE HAD DECLINED TO IDENTIFY ITS GUATEMALAN CONSULTANT AND HAD ASSURED HIM OF ANONYMITY. THE AMBASSADOR WENT ON TO SAY HE DOUBTED VERY MUCH THERE WAS ANY POLITICAL MOTIVATION BEHIND THE DEL MONTE STATEMENT NOR ANY INTENTION TO DAMAGE PRESIDENT LAUGERUD OR HIS GOVERNMENT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REJOINED THAT THE DEL MONTE STATEMENT WAS IRRESPONSIBLE AND COULD NOT HELP BUT HAVE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS IN GUATEMALA. DEL MONTE SHOULD REMEMBER THE DIFFICULTIES CAUSED FOR UNITED BRANDS IN HONDURAS BY THE REVELATION OF ITS ACTIVITIES THERE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, BRIBERY, ALLEGATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GUATEM03672
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750244-0648
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750756/aaaabxxf.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WALL STREET JOURNAL STORY REGARDING DEL MONTE AND GUATEMALA
TAGS: PINT, EINV, GT, US, WALL STREET JOURNAL, UNITED BRANDS, DEL MONTE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006